Increase in Trade Deficit

2332. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been sharp increase in the trade deficit from minus $ 523.8 million in April, 1999 to minus $ 11104 million in April, 2000;

(b) whether this is inspite of a 30 per cent growth in exports during the same period; and

(c) if so, what is the reason for this sharp increase in the Trade Balance?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) As per the DGCI&S provisional data trade deficit during April, 2000 has increased to US $ (-) 1110.35 million from US $ (-) 523.76 million in April, 1999.

(b) Exports during April, 2000 registered a growth rate of 30.04% in US $ terms over the provisional figure of April, 1999.

(c) Trade balance is the difference between imports and exports. Imports are made by the trade and industry as per the needs of the economy. One of the main reasons for the sharp increase in import bill has been the increae in the value of oil imports due to rise in oil prices.

Export of Tea to Pakistan

2333. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have proposal to export tea to Pakistan;

(b) if so, what are the other items being presently exported to that country;

(c) whether these items are being exported directly or through any third country; and